

# 9.0 - Partnerships

## 9.1 - Introduction



The planning policies that guide development in the metropolitan region will significantly influence Grand Rapids' success in achieving important planning objectives. In addition, collaboration among city departments, residents, property owners, businesses and institutions will be essential in bringing the Master Plan's recommendations to fruition. Both regional and community partnerships are needed.



## Why is It Important to Have Partners?

The citizens of Grand Rapids expressed the following beliefs about public, private, local and regional partnerships.

- Grand Rapids should establish partnerships and work with its neighboring communities.
- A public transportation system that links the region and positively affects growth patterns should be developed.
- All people, regardless of their income levels and/or the stages of their lives should have a choice in housing.
- The needs of all transportation modes should be addressed and balanced.
- Political power has to be shared in order to have a healthy foundation for the community.
- Growth should be planned so that natural features, farmland and open spaces are protected.

Local and regional cooperation and public and private partnerships are essential for a successful future for everyone. Efforts to reduce sprawl, minimize farmland conversion, protect air and water quality, and maintain a high quality of life are goals that can only be accomplished by working together. Informed citizens and decision-makers must learn to balance the interests of their backyards with the overall good of the city and the region. The vitality of Grand Rapids can significantly impact the long-term health and growth of the region, just as the health of a neighborhood's housing stock can affect the vitality of an adjoining business district. It is this interrelatedness that requires us to work together towards common solutions; such as improved mass transit options, stormwater management, and infrastructure planning.



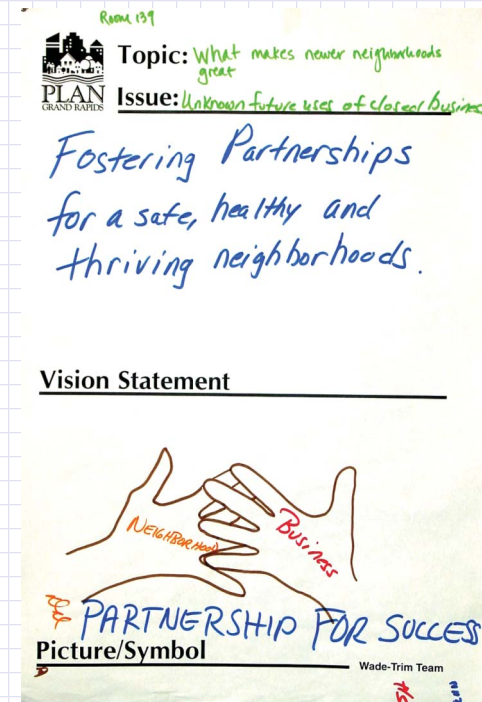
Small working groups were frequently used in meetings.

## 9.2 - Visions

One of the first steps of the master plan process was to ask the citizens of Grand Rapids what they would like to see the city look like twenty years from now. At the first Community Forum more than 300 people came together to discuss the future of Grand Rapids. Their discussion was guided by the information gathered during a series of neighborhood and business association meetings and discussion guide responses collected in the first two months of the planning process. Eleven major categories summarized key issues and provided participants a variety of discussion topics from which to choose. The beliefs and issues used at the forum were developed from the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified previously. Statements and images that described a vision, or preferred future, for Grand Rapids were then created by forum participants in small groups. The following visions emerged.

### 9.2.1 - Working Together

During the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Grand Rapids will build on its strengths to become one of the Midwest's great cities. Our success will be founded on a shared vision for the future and strong partnerships. These partnerships will foster the inclusion of all citizens and collaboration among informed residents, forward-looking business people, dedicated non-profit organizations and educational institutions and a community-oriented government. Expanded regional cooperation will also be important in maintaining our city's economic vitality and making us a national model in controlling sprawl, balancing transportation choices and serving as responsible stewards of the natural environment.



Posters are from the first Master Plan Community Forum held at Central High School in March 2001.



# Neighborhood Associations

Alger Heights Neighborhood Association  
 Auburn Hills Neighborhood Association  
 Baxter Neighborhood Association  
 Black Hills Citizens for a Better Community  
 Creston Neighborhood Association  
 East Hills Council of Neighbors  
 Eastgate Neighborhood Association  
 Easttown Community Association  
 Fulton Heights Neighborhood Association  
 Garfield Park Neighborhood Association  
 Heartside Neighborhood Association  
 Heritage Hill Association  
 Highland Park Association  
 John Ball Park Community Association  
 Ken-O-Sha Neighborhood Association  
 Madison Area Neighborhood Association  
 Michigan Oaks Neighborhood Association  
 Midtown Neighborhood Association  
 Millbrook Neighborhood Association  
 Neighbors of Belknap Lookout  
 North East Citizens Action Association  
 North End Neighborhood Association  
 Ottawa Hills Neighbors Association  
 Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association  
 Shawmut Hills/ Covell R-1 Preservation Association  
 South East Community Association  
 South East End Neighborhood Association  
 Southwest Area Neighbors  
 West Grand Neighborhood Organization  
 West Side Connection

For current phone numbers, please contact Community Development at 456-3677.

Figure 9.a - Neighborhood Association Map

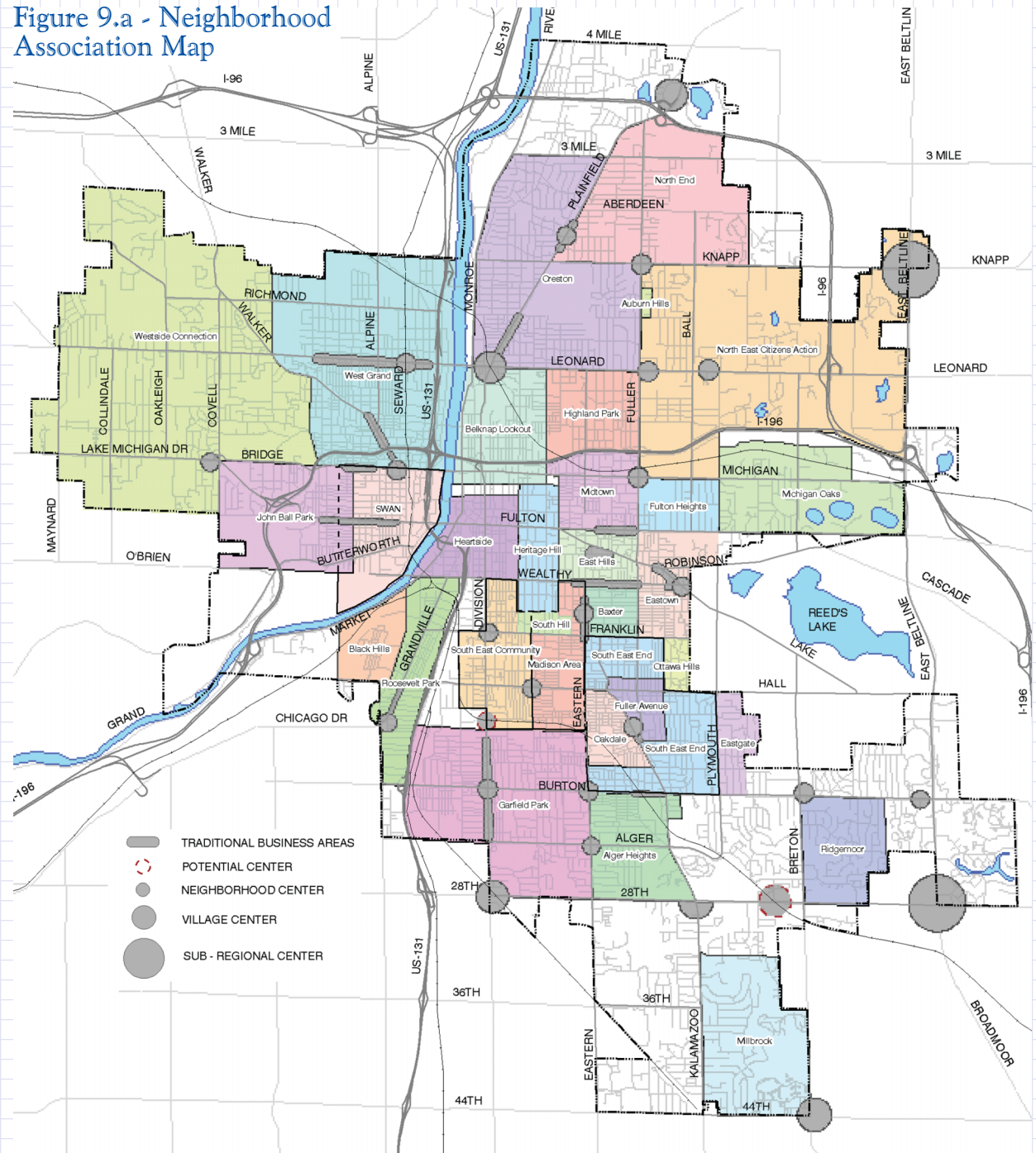
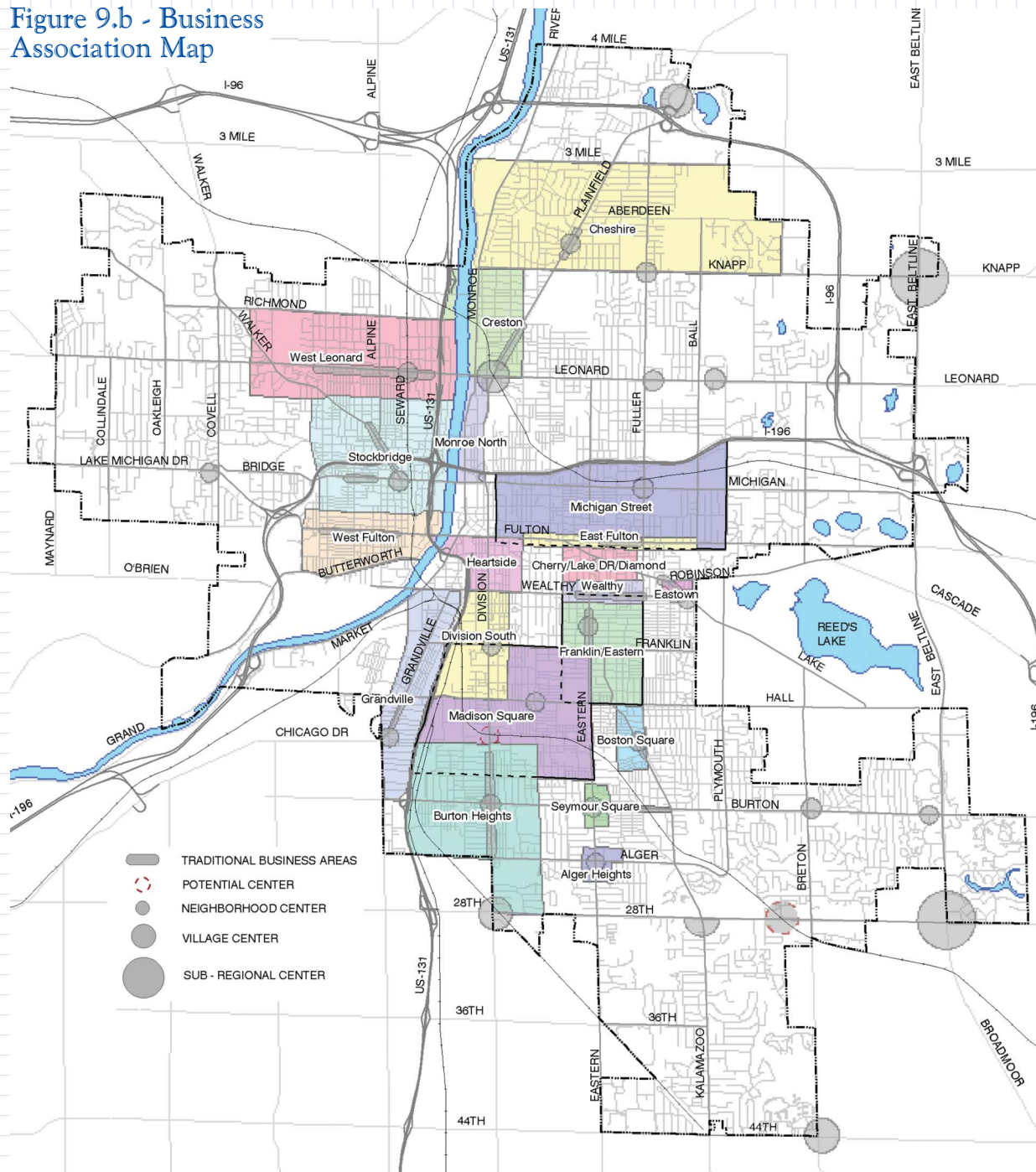


Figure 9.b - Business Association Map



## Business Associations

Alger Heights Business Association  
 Boston Square Business Association  
 Burton Heights Business Association  
 Cherry/Lake/Diamond Business Association  
 Cheshire Village Business Association  
 Creston Business Association  
 Division South Business Association  
 East Fulton Business Association  
 Easttown Business Association  
 Grandville Avenue Business Association  
 Franklin/Eastern Business Association  
 Heartside Business Association  
 Madison Square Business Association  
 Michigan Street Area Business Association  
 Monroe North Business Association  
 Seymour Square Business Association  
 Stockbridge Business Association  
 Wealthy Street Business Alliance  
 West Fulton Business Association  
 West Leonard Business Association

Please call the Neighborhood Business Specialists Program at 771-0314 for contact information.



## 9.3 - Plan Recommendations

Plan recommendations focus on regional and community partnerships.

### 9.3.1 - Regional Partnerships

There are many topics addressed in the preceding chapters that require coordination and cooperation with immediately adjacent jurisdictions, as well as all units of government and agencies within the region. These include, for example, transportation and transit planning, policies for population growth and job location, affordable housing, the planning and development of an open space and trail network, watershed planning for stormwater management and, of course, land use patterns.

The City of Grand Rapids is already involved in collaborative planning with regional agencies and neighboring jurisdictions. These initiatives include:

- planning for future development along the northern portion of the East Beltline (with Grand Rapids Charter Township and Plainfield Charter Township);
- working with the Interurban Transit Partnership (ITP) on bus service and the evaluation of potential fixed guideway route alternatives;
- participation in the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's (GVMC) Urban Metro Committee to discuss the future of major street corridors and other shared issues;
- collaboration with the City of Walker in exploring a joint initiative for creating a "sustainable business industrial park".

The Master Plan recommends that these efforts be continued and expanded. To this end, the city conducted a series of meetings with immediately adjacent jurisdictions (East Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids Township, Kentwood, Plainfield Township, Walker and Wyoming) in the summer of 2002. The purpose of these meetings was threefold:

- to share information on Grand Rapids' Master Plan;
- to gain insight into planning issues at community boundaries; and
- to identify possible joint planning initiatives.

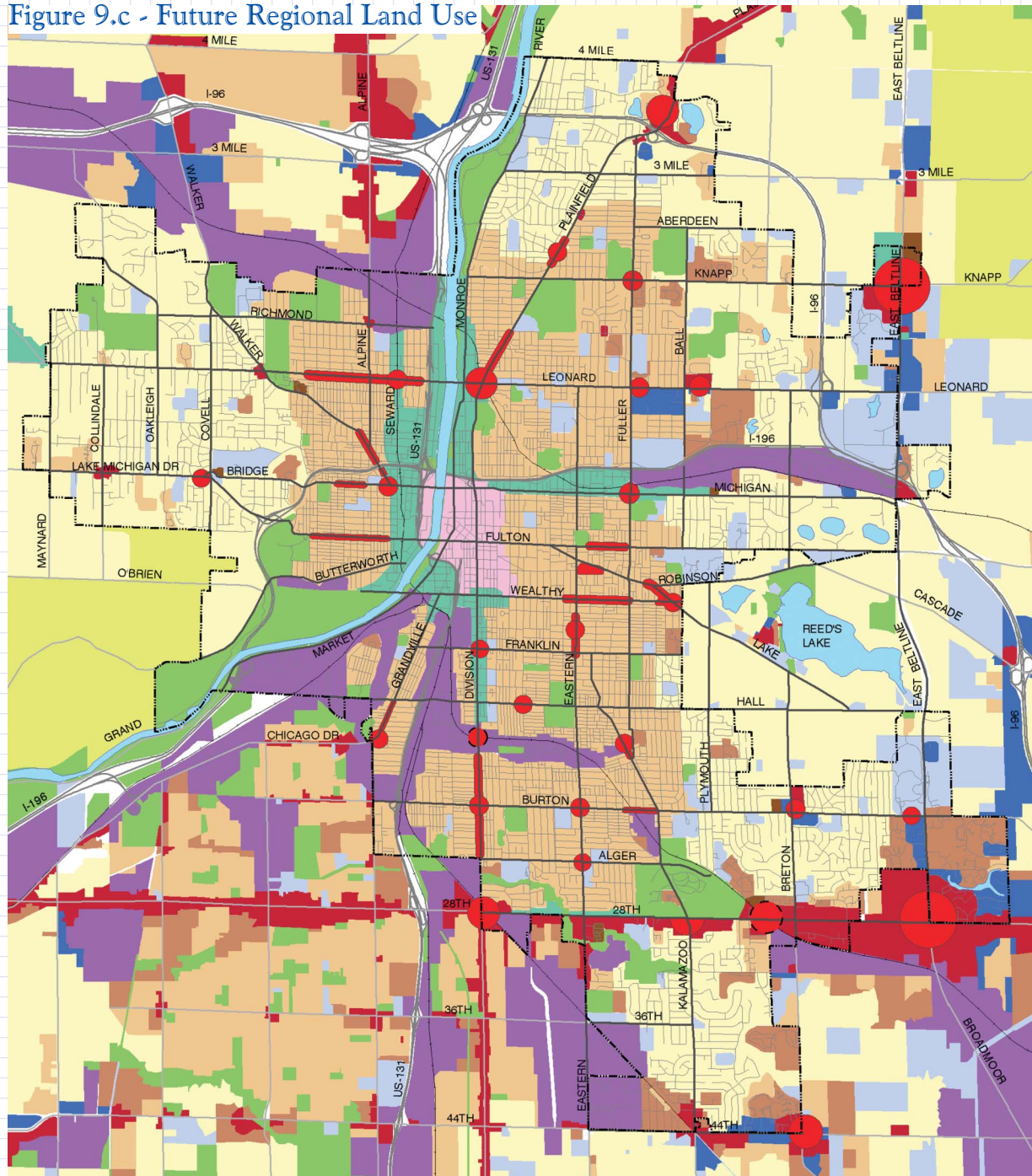
Future development sites, and possible development proposals, were discussed, as well planned park acquisitions and programs and future trail and side-walk connections. The following joint projects were suggested:

- land use and transportation on 28th Street (Kentwood, Wyoming);
- coordination of commercial land use planning on Plainfield Avenue (Grand Rapids and Plainfield Townships);
- 32nd Street reconstruction (Wyoming);
- the Grand-Walk industrial area (Walker); and
- a shared public works site (Walker).



*Neighborhood associations like East Hills Council of Neighbors play an integral role in the city's neighborhoods.*

Figure 9.c - Future Regional Land Use



## 9.3.2 - Community Partnerships

The process of developing the Master Plan has set a new standard for collaboration among city departments, residents, property owners, business people and institutions in shaping land use and development directions. Continued collaboration will be essential in translating these directions into actual development decisions that build on the Master Plan's recommendations. In particular, priority should be given to collaborative area-specific planning for revitalizing neighborhoods and proposed mixed-use areas (see *Chapter 11 - Area-Specific Plans - Page 151*).

### LEGEND

- ULTRA LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- DOWNTOWN
- OFFICE
- MIXED USE
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- PARKS/OPEN SPACE
- AGRICULTURAL
- TRADITIONAL BUSINESS AREAS
- POTENTIAL CENTER
- EXISTING RAIL
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
- VILLAGE CENTER
- SUB-REGIONAL CENTER





Photo courtesy of ArtWorks Expanded Visions 2001 youth apprenticeship program.

## 9.4 - Objectives and Policies

The following objectives and policies summarize what needs to be done to achieve the vision and plan recommendations presented on the preceding pages so that Grand Rapids continues to collaborate with partners in the community and the region. Above each objective is a line of theme icons. The icons illustrate how a particular objective is interrelated with another Master Plan theme. See Page 24 for a description of each theme.



### Objective P 1

**Serve as a strong partner in the provision of regional infrastructure and services.**

- Collaborate in the development of regional transportation plans and priorities (for air, rail, street, highway, transit and bicycles) and the design of transportation projects.
- Update the Water and Sewer Master Plan consistent with the policy framework established by this Master Plan.
- Pursue cooperation and cost sharing between benefiting jurisdictions in providing public facilities and services.
- Encourage the coordination of local capital improvement programming within the metropolitan region.
- Cooperate in the development of a significant regional park and greenway system.
- Encourage intergovernmental and public/private cooperation in decisions concerning the location of developments of greater than local impact (e.g., major new shopping centers, employment centers, cultural facilities).
- Encourage the establishment of standards that require adequate public facilities and services to be in place concurrent with new development.



### Objective P 2

**Work as part of the larger metropolitan community to develop plans and strategies for regional growth and development.**

- Strengthen existing communities and direct development toward these activity centers.
- Promote sustainable development patterns and practices.
- Support the provision of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households throughout the metropolitan area.
- Promote the balanced, efficient, economical and environmentally sensitive use of land in a manner that minimizes land use conflicts across municipal borders and preserves the unique character of each community.



### Objective P 3

**Promote coordination with state agencies and among city departments in implementing the recommendations of the Master Plan.**

- Continue to coordinate and target infrastructure investments with other public and private improvement initiatives.
- Promote information sharing among universities, foundations, regional agencies, the public schools, the city and the public in helping to guide well informed investment decisions.



**Objective P 4**

**Collaborate with neighborhood and business organizations in planning and development decisions.**

- a. Develop, implement and continuously refine a land use decision-making process that is community based and partnership driven.
- b. Encourage and support the establishment of active neighborhood and business organizations and collaborate with them in planning and development decisions.
- c. Encourage consensus-based decision-making and assist in conflict resolution.
- d. Provide information and technical assistance to neighborhood and business organizations on planning and development issues.
- e. Develop and support programs that continue to build citizen capacity to make informed planning and development decisions.



**Objective P 5**

**Strengthen educational partnerships.**

- a. Continue to cooperate with the public schools to provide joint park-school facilities.
- b. Encourage partnerships between residents, neighborhood organizations, area businesses, faith-based organizations and institutions of higher learning to enhance the achievement levels of students.
- c. Recognize the importance of neighborhood schools in building and strengthening community.



**Objective P 6**

**Ensure that respect for diversity in all areas is a strength of our city.**

- a. Celebrate the benefits of diversity within the community and recognize the efforts of those who promote enhanced understanding and tolerance among people of diverse backgrounds.